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UNIDO FOLLOW-UP TO THE GLOBAL BIOTECHNOLOGY FORUM

Note by the Secretariat

Reports on follow-up activities in compliance with Board decision IDB.28/Dec.6 to the Global Biotechnology Forum held at Concepción, Chile, from 2 to 5 March 2004.

Introduction

1. The present document provides information on developments with regard to UNIDO's follow-up to the Global Biotechnology Forum (GBF) in compliance with decision IDB.28/Dec.6, which called upon the Director-General to take into account the final statement of the GBF, as contained in annex II to document IDB.28/8, in planning and implementing relevant follow-up activities fully within UNIDO's mandate.

I. INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

2. In line with the final statement and also following United Nations General Assembly resolution 58/200 regarding inter-agency cooperation, UNIDO has strengthened its links with other relevant international agencies active in the area of biotechnology, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). After initial discussions the following areas of mutual interest have been identified, and ongoing discussions are intended to specify the nature of cooperation:

- OECD—Two areas of potential cooperation have been established: industrial biotechnology capacity-building and skills enhancement, and utilization of genetic resources for industrial development;
- FAO—The area for potential cooperation focuses on biological renewable energy systems and non-food crops for industrial utilization;
- UNESCO—Cooperation envisages joint activities in setting up specialized courses for biotechnology management focusing on bioentrepreneurship and business development.

3. In addition, UNIDO hopes to extend its cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the areas of conservation and industrial utilization of biodiversity. In this regard and beyond the pilot phase of the implementation of the Biosafety Clearing House, UNIDO is streamlining its biosafety activities in the context of ongoing capacity-

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building programmes of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with particular emphasis on information provision and training in biosafety.

II. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

4. UNIDO has been holding internal discussions to assess the key needs and aspirations of developing countries in relation to the opportunities that industrial biotechnology offers to these countries.

5. In keeping within its mandate UNIDO focuses on industrial biotechnology, also referred to as white biotechnology. White biotechnology encompasses such activities as bioremediation, renewable biologically-derived energy sources, biocatalysis and the upgrading of low-value raw material to high-added-value products. UNIDO sees its role in assisting its client countries to explore future prospects associated with industrial biotechnological developments. In this context UNIDO is planning to prepare short papers as a framework for discussions at regional and national meetings.

6. The joint UNIDO/International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) working group for GBF follow-up has developed its terms of reference and will reconvene during the last quarter of 2004.

7. The report of GBF will be distributed in late October 2004 and will be available on the UNIDO web site (www.unido.org/biotech).[1] Member States will be apprised of any further developments relevant to Board decision IDB.28/Dec.6 or other mandates.

III. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE BOARD

8. The Board may wish to take note of the information provided in the present document.

[1] The draft final report was circulated to permanent missions with an information note on 20 May 2004.